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29 January 1983

Daily Summary of Positions on INF—Classified DevelopmentsAllies Express Views at NAC Meeting

The NATO Allies at a North Atlantic Council meeting on Thursday welcomed Ambassador Nitze's statement that while the zero option remains the ultimate goal of the INF negotiations, the US is prepared to consider seriously all Soviet proposals at Geneva. The Allies stressed the importance of demonstrating to the West European public that the West is attempting to achieve concrete progress in arms control based on equality and parity. The West German representative called for the Allies to look into how to achieve the ultimate goal of no US or Soviet INF missiles in Europe. The Italian and West German representatives also stressed the importance of maintaining close consultations with the West European governments on INF policy and proposed interim reports to the Council on progress in the negotiations. They also stated that the SCG meeting on 14 February will be critical for assessing future INF strategy and for devising an effective public presentation on NATO's INF policy.

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Comment: While Allied governments do not expect the US to make a public change in its negotiating position now, they almost certainly will ask Vice President Bush for details of US thinking on alternatives to zero. They will also expect full discussion of such details at the SCG meeting next month..

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Belgium Reaffirms Support for US

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Embassy Brussels reports that, during Ambassador Nitze's meeting on Tuesday with Prime Minister Martens and Foreign Minister Tindemans, the latter said it is necessary for the West to respond to the Soviet propaganda offensive, perhaps at the SCG. The Embassy notes that Tindemans renewed his support for the zero option in interviews on both Flemish and Walloon television and radio, although the Flemish press gave his remarks "cursory" attention, and the Walloon press did not report them at all.

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Dutch Clarify Stand on Zero Option

A senior Foreign Ministry official has told our Embassy at The Hague that his Ministry continues to support the zero option since the alternative implies INF deployments in the Netherlands—something the Dutch would like to avoid, given the prospect of political turmoil. He also said that zero is probably not obtainable, and indicated that the Dutch will come up with alternatives if NATO undertakes consultations on a new negotiating stance. The official added that his Ministry firmly opposes inclusion of British and French systems in INF negotiations but believes they will have to be taken into account in the future.

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